In The Claims

1. (Currently Amended) Apparatus for sterilizing a container comprising:

a first supply source of sterile air;

a supply source of sterilant~~, wherein the supply source of sterilant includes a spoon dipper apparatus~~;

an atomizing system producing an atomized sterilant from the mixing of the sterile air from the first supply source of sterile air with the sterilant;

a second supply source ~~of a continuous~~ providing a non-intermittent supply of hot sterile air to a conduit, wherein said conduit is operationally coupled between said atomizing system and a container, and wherein said atomized sterilant is intermittently added to said conduit ~~for continuously providing the hot sterile air to the atomized sterilant~~;

a mechanism for applying the atomized sterilant and the second supply source of hot sterile air on to ~~a~~ the container; and

a third supply source of a hot sterile drying air for activating and drying the sterilant in the interior of the container, wherein the container is upright.

2. (Original) The apparatus of claim 1, further including a heater for adding additional heat to the atomized sterilant.

3. (Original) The apparatus of claim 1, wherein the container is a bottle.

4. (Original) The apparatus of claim 1, wherein the sterilant is hydrogen peroxide.

5. (Canceled)

~~6.~~ 5. (Original) The apparatus of claim 1, wherein the atomizing system further includes an atomizing venturi.

~~7.~~ 6. (Currently Amended) The apparatus of claim 1, wherein the second supply source of non-intermittent hot sterile air further includes a humidity control system for maintaining the humidity of the hot sterile air.

8. (Canceled)

9. (Canceled)

~~10.~~ 7. (Original) The apparatus of claim 1, wherein after drying the container interior surface retains a concentration of hydrogen peroxide less than .5 PPM.

~~11.~~ 13. (Currently Amended) A method for sterilizing a container comprising:

providing a first supply of sterile air;

providing a supply of sterilant ~~including providing a spoon dipper apparatus for measuring the quantity of the sterilant~~;

producing an atomized sterilant by mixing the first supply of sterile air with the sterilant;

~~providing a second supply of continuous hot sterile air to the atomized sterilant;~~

applying ~~a mixture of the continuous hot sterile air and~~ the atomized sterilant to the container; ~~and~~

supplying a third supply of hot sterile drying air for activating and drying the sterilant in

the interior of the container, wherein the container is upright and plastic; and

applying the third supply of hot sterile drying air to the container for about 24 seconds, wherein the interior of the container immediately after the applying retains a concentration of hydrogen peroxide of less than .5 PPM.

~~12.~~ 14. (Original) The method of claim ~~11~~ 13, further including the step of providing a heater for adding additional heat to the atomized sterilant.

~~13.~~ 15. (Original) The method of claim ~~11~~ 13, wherein the container is a bottle.

~~14.~~ 16. (Original) The method of claim ~~11~~ 13, wherein the sterilant is hydrogen peroxide.

15. (Canceled)

~~16.~~ 17. (Original) The method of claim ~~11~~ 13, wherein the step of producing an atomized sterilant further includes providing an atomizing venturi for mixing the first supply of sterile air with the sterilant.

~~18.~~ 9 ~~17.~~ (Currently Amended) The method of claim ~~11~~ 8, wherein the step of providing a second ~~source~~ supply of ~~continuous~~ non-intermittent hot sterile air further includes providing a humidity control system for maintaining the humidity of the ~~continuous~~ non-intermittent hot sterile air.

18. (Canceled)

19. (Canceled)

20. (Canceled)

22. ~~21~~. (Currently Amended) Apparatus comprising:

means for supplying a first source of sterile air;

means for supplying a source of sterilant, including a spoon dipper apparatus;

means for providing an atomizing system for producing an atomized sterilant from the mixing of sterile air from the first source of sterile air with the sterilant;

means for ~~supplying~~ applying a second source of hot sterile air non-intermittently to ~~the atomized sterilant~~ a volume;

means for applying the atomizing sterilant intermittently to the volume thereby mixing the second source of non-intermittent hot sterile air with the atomizing sterilant;

means for applying the mixture of atomized sterilant and the second source of non-intermittent hot sterile air to a container; and

means for supplying a third source of hot sterile drying air into the interior of the container for activating and drying the sterilant, wherein the container is upright.

23. ~~22~~ (Original) The apparatus of claim 22, wherein the means for supplying a third source of hot sterile drying air further includes a means for providing a residual concentration of hydrogen peroxide less than .5 PPM.

Please add the following new claims:

24. ~~23~~ (New) The apparatus of claim 1, wherein said atomized sterilant is only added to said conduit per

each application of atomized sterilant and the second supply source of hot sterile air on to the container.

24. 11. (New) The apparatus of claim 1, wherein said second supply source is provided only during operation of said apparatus.

25. 12. (New) The apparatus of claim 1, wherein the supply source of sterilant further includes a spoon dipper apparatus.

26. 8. (New) The apparatus of claim 7, wherein the third supply source of hot sterile drying air is applied to the container for about 24 seconds.

27. 18. (New) The method of claim 13, further comprising:

providing a conduit operationally coupled between the container and a location where said atomized sterilant is produced;

providing a second supply of non-intermittent hot sterile air to the conduit;

adding the atomized sterilant to the conduit intermittently; and further wherein the applying the atomized sterilant step includes applying a mixture of the non-intermittent hot sterile air and the atomized sterilant to the container.

28. 19. (New) The method of claim 18, wherein the adding the atomized sterilant is done per each said applying said mixture.

29. 20. (New) The method of claim 18, wherein said providing a second supply is done during operation of said method.

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30. 21. (New) The method of claim 11, wherein providing a supply of sterilant further includes providing a spoon dipper apparatus for measuring a quantity of the sterilant.

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